

2023

YEAR IN REVIEW

AMELIA  ISLAND

COME MAKE MEMORIES

AmeliaIslandTDC.com

LOOKING BACK - PLANNING AHEAD

Reflecting on the past year, 2023 presented a series of challenges for the travel industry, particularly in Florida. With significant inflationary pressures and robust average daily rates (ADR), coupled with a notable dip in summer visitation driven by a surge in European travel among domestic tourists, the landscape was undeniably complex. Despite these obstacles, Amelia Island demonstrated resilience and destination appeal throughout the year.

Amidst the backdrop of economic turbulence and shifting travel patterns, Amelia Island experienced a notable increase in visitation and economic impact. This achievement is a testament to the destination's enduring allure and the destination's ability to adapt to evolving market conditions.

As the destination embarks on the journey into 2024, strategic foresight and agility will be paramount to navigate persistent inflation, sluggish recovery of overseas markets, and intensified competition within the travel industry. To seize opportunities amidst these challenges, Amelia Island will maintain a steadfast focus on addressing consumer needs and desires, leveraging seasonality and areas of untapped potential.

In the coming year, the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners and the Amelia Island Convention and Visitors Bureau will spearhead efforts to strategically expand tourism initiatives, fostering economic growth across the county.

Backed by strategic research and an unwavering commitment to excellence, Amelia Island is poised to tackle the challenges of 2024, ensuring sustained strength and growth in the year ahead.

MISSION STATEMENT

Created by the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners in 1988, the Amelia Island Tourist Development Council (AITDC) oversees the development and marketing of Amelia Island as a world-class tourism destination.

As provided by Florida law, the AITDC is responsible for the expenditure of revenues received from the levy and imposition of the tourism development tax.

The goals of the AITDC are to generate visitation to Amelia Island and its attractions and special events, thereby increasing tax revenues, including sales taxes and those imposed on the hospitality industry.

In turn, those tax revenues may be used to:



IMPROVE

the quality of life for the citizens of the community



PROVIDE

support for our beaches



ENSURE

a viable hospitality industry

FUNDING

The AITDC is funded by a 5% tourist tax on short-term accommodations on Amelia Island. How these user fees must be spent was established and voted on by a county ordinance in 1988 and mandates the bed tax revenue breakdown as:



65%

Advertising & Marketing



15%

Administration



10%

Travel Trade



10%

Beach Improvements

More than 75% of bed tax revenues are dedicated to promoting Amelia Island for leisure and business travelers with only 15% spent on administration and 10% on beach improvements. Comparatively, according to Destinations International, Destination Marketing Organizations of a similar budget size spend more than 48% on administration.

DESTINATION RECOGNITION

AMELIA ISLAND RANKING



#3 of Top Islands in the US
2022 & 2023



#8 Top U.S. Islands in
Continental US



#36 of the 50 Best Small
Towns in the South



#5 Best Family Beach
Vacations in the US

NEW YORK TRAVEL GUIDES

#58 of the 140 Most
Romantic Small Towns in
America, Readers Choice



#1 Best Family-Friendly Beach Town, Florida East
Wherever Traveler, 2023

#7 Best Romantic Getaways

#11 Best Places to Visit in
Florida

#11 Best Beaches in Florida
for 2023

#16 Best Beaches in the US
for 2023

#13 Best Honeymoon
Destinations in the USA



#13 Favorite Resorts in
Florida - The Ritz-Carlton,
Amelia Island

AMELIA ISLAND

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU



The Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau (AICVB) maintains the Destination Marketing Accreditation (DMAP) by Destinations International. DMAP is an independent global accreditation body and a leader in defining quality and performance issues in destination management. Achieving the rigorous accreditation standards, the DMAP ensures the AICVB achieves a significant measure of excellence in destination marketing.

AICVB CONTINUED TO WIN RECOGNITION FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING TOURISM MARKETING EFFORTS IN 2023 INCLUDING:



Flagler Awards | VISIT FLORIDA

- Best of Show
- Henry Awards in Social Media Marketing and Mobile Marketing categories
- Bronze Awards in Radio and Print Advertising categories



Adrian Awards | Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International

- President's Award plus Silver Award in Digital Technology
- President's Awards plus Bronze Awards in Digital Innovation and Publisher Digital Content categories
- Bronze Awards in Public Relations Feature Placement, Digital Video and Digital Social Media categories



GUIDING LIGHT

As the destination sets course for 2024, early signs indicate that headwinds and challenges are emerging as Q1 metrics reveal sluggish performance during typically resilient periods. The year ahead will require a steadfast focus on research for all marketing initiatives while aggressively driving incremental visitation to shoulder seasons. In addition to remaining data and performance driven, it is critical that the destination remains focused on ensuring a strong brand value proposition is delivered. Such a commitment to metrics and tonality will ensure the destination is able to attract and convert visitation to the success of the region.

VISITATION

- Manage Visitation through Yield
- Drive Shoulder Season Visitation
- Target High Potential Under Performing (HPUP) Markets
- Drive Repeat Visitation

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Deliver Positive Visitor Experience
- Create World-class Beach Destination
- Enhance Visitor Communications
- Expand Product Development
- Elevate Destination Appeal and Inspiration

MARKETING ENGAGEMENT

- Develop a Destination Value Proposition
- Deliver More Aggressive Lower-Funnel Messaging
- Develop Industry Toolkits
- Drive Loyalist Engagement
- Research Focused

INDUSTRY & COMMUNITY

- Support Tourism Industry Partners
- Secure Strong Industry Relations
- Improve Quality of Life for Locals
- Engage with Local Community
- Maximize Return on Investment (ROI)



PROTECTING OUR BEACH

The AITDC is dedicated to building a sustainable and viable tourism economy on Amelia Island, working to protect and promote our valuable natural assets, including the island's more than 13 miles of pristine beach.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

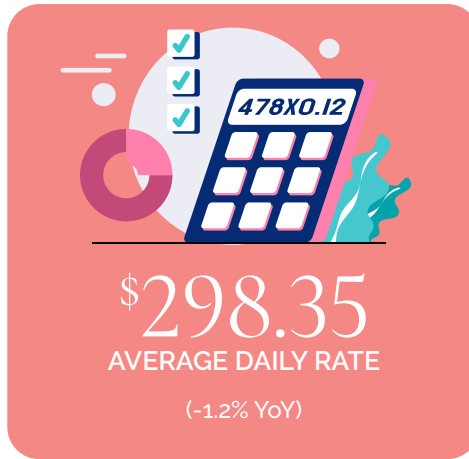
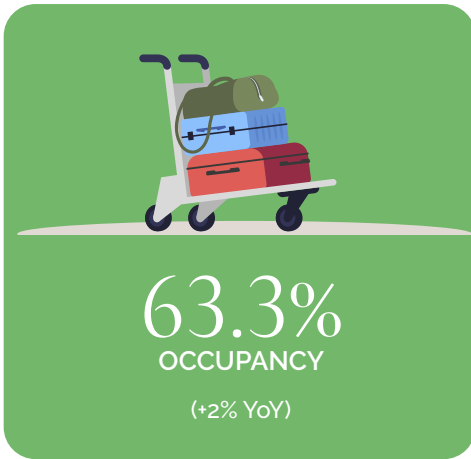
- As required in the local beach ordinance, continued to work with local government and stakeholders to communicate the Leave No Trace (LNT) requirements.
- Spent over \$385,000 on beach cleaning and beach restroom cleaning, gathering 61 tons of trash picked up across seven beach parks.
- Finalized a Beach Park Harmonization effort to create a conceptual vision for the 7 main beach parks on Amelia Island.
- Earmarked \$3 million in TDT reserves in the Nassau County Capital Improvement Plan for beach related capital improvements.
- 97% of visitors rated Amelia Island's beaches as excellent or very good overall (72% rated them as excellent).
- 98% of visitors rated the cleanliness of Amelia Island's beaches as excellent or very good (85% rated it as excellent).



MEASURES OF SUCCESS



Source: Nassau County Tax Collector, FY23



Source: Smith Travel Research; Reports hotel & resort data only. Data reflects the calendar year 2023.



\$932.9M

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT
(+2.9% YoY)
(FY23)



846.4K

OVERNIGHT COMMERCIAL
LODGING VISITORS
(+12% YoY)

\$734.4M

SPENT BY OVERNIGHT GUESTS
IN DIRECT EXPENDITURES
(+6.5% YoY)

Source: Visitor Profile, Research Data Sources

EVERY MARKETING
DOLLAR GENERATES

\$148.80

IN ECONOMIC RETURN
TO THE COUNTY
(FY23)



\$44.8M

(+19.4% YoY)
TOTAL TOURISM SALES TAX
(FY23)

38.6%

TOURISM PERCENTAGE OF TAX
(Total Sales Tax Collected \$116.1M
for FY2023)

Source: Nassau County Tax Collector



\$687.9M

TOTAL TAXABLE SALES
IN NASSAU COUNTY BY
TOURISM RELATED BUSINESS
(CY23)

Source: Florida Department of Revenue

31K Visitors

Hosted by the **Amelia Island Welcome Center** in the
historic train depot in 2023.



Source: Downs & St. Germain, FY2023, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research.
Unless noted, data reflects calendar year 2023.

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

VISITOR PROFILE

Effectively reaching and influencing travelers begins with understanding who they are, what they value and what they love most about Amelia Island.



38%

FIRST TIME VISITORS
(+3.0% YoY)

2.9

PERSONS
Average Party Size
(+3% YoY)

49

AVERAGE AGE
of Visitor
(+2% YoY)

TRAVEL PARTY COMPOSITION

(Multiple Response)

Couples	51%	(No Change YoY)
Families	46%	(-2.0% YoY)
Group of Friends	11%	(No Change YoY)
Single	6%	(+50% YoY)

VISITOR ORIGINS BY REGION

Florida	207,547	(-3.1% YoY)
Southeast	352,249	(+0.3% YoY)
Northeast	82,402	(+4.2% YoY)
Midwest	79,182	(+22.2% YoY)
West	25,184	(-13.7% YoY)
International	16,836	(-1.3% YoY)

94%

Plan to **RETURN**
(No Change YoY)

98%

Visitor **SATISFACTION**
(No Change YoY)

99%

of Visitors would
RECOMMEND AMELIA ISLAND
(No Change YoY)

50%

of Visitors saw
AMELIA ISLAND MESSAGING
(-7.0% YoY)

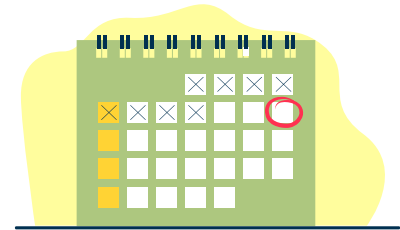
\$143,042

Annual
HOUSEHOLD INCOME
(+2.0% YoY)



\$2,651

Total Base **BUDGET**
(+3.0% YoY)



33.9 DAYS

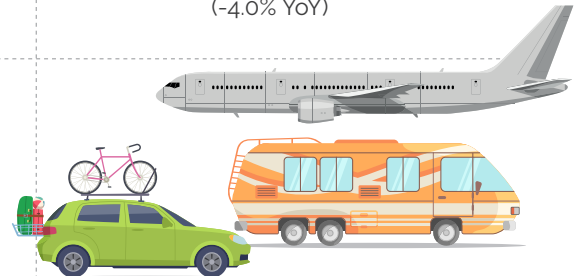
ADVANCED PLANNING WINDOW
(-4.0% YoY)

24.3 DAYS

BOOKING WINDOW
(-6.0% YoY)

3.7 DAYS

AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY
(-4.0% YoY)



TRANSPORTATION MODE

Fly or combination		
Fly/Drive	19%	(+12% YoY)
Drive	81%	(-2.0% YoY)



Little Sandy Short Course on Omni Amelia Island Resort

DESTINATION MARKETING

The core of Amelia Island's tourism program is rooted in effective destination marketing. 2023 saw the launch of a wide variety of marketing initiatives ranging from consumer focused and business-to-business. In 2023, a new effort focused on developing sports tourism was launched.

OUR MARKETING INITIATIVES ARE GUIDED BY EIGHT MARKETING PRINCIPLES



Social
Responsibility



Dynamic &
Flexible



Quality vs.
Quantity



Data-Driven
Decision Making



Valuable
Partnerships



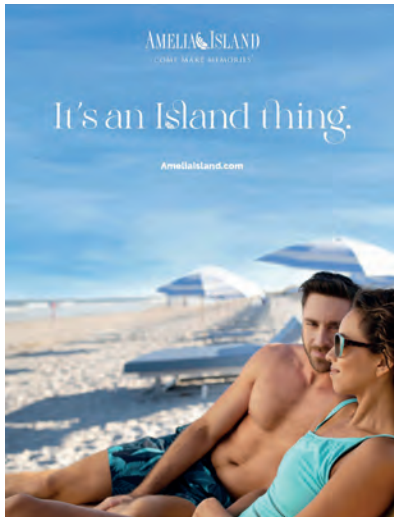
Integrated
Marketing



Always
On



Brand
Identity

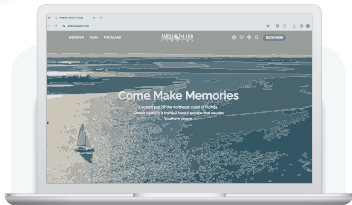


It's an
Island
thing.

Based on the changes to consumer trends and marketing technology and the need for a refresh of creative assets, in late 2022 we executed and launched a new creative campaign. Complete with new videos, images and compelling copy, the "It's an Island thing" campaign showcases the island topography - from the beaches to the east to the marshes in the west, and all the activities in between. We built a dynamic content library consisting of hundreds of new videos and still images. Unveiled at the annual industry marketing meeting, the campaign and the new marketing plan build on the past gains and experience developed to drive a sustainable tourism industry in Nassau County.

MARKETING PERFORMANCE

AMELIAISLAND.COM



3.4M+
PAGE VIEWS
(+34.8% YoY)

1.6M
USERS
(+46.4% YoY)

99%
NEW USERS

2:06
Minutes
AVERAGE SESSION
DURATION

TOP PERFORMING PAGES

- HOMEPAGE
- DICKENS ON CENTRE
- WEDDINGS
- LODGING
- ACTIVITIES
- BEACH TRAVEL GUIDE



72.2%
MOBILE DEVICES
(+7.7% YoY)



24.2%
DESKTOP
(-16.5% YoY)



3.6%
TABLET
(-10% YoY)

USER DEMOGRAPHICS

While a vast majority of visitors to the website do not share age detail, from the data available:

35-64 Years	62.7%
35-44 Years	18.4%
45-54 Years	21.5%
55-64 Years	22.8%



WEBSITE GROWTH MARKETS YoY

+122.6%	+77%	+75.1%	+67.7%
OHIO	VIRGINIA	CALIFORNIA	PENNSYLVANIA
+50.5%	+44.3%	+19.4%	
ILLINOIS	GEORGIA	FLORIDA	



136K

ACCOMMODATIONS SEARCHES

(+54.6% YoY)
leading to

71,186

LODGING PARTNER REFERRALS

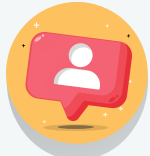
(+23.81% YoY)



Source: Google Analytics, CY23; Source: Book>Direct - Performance Summary CY23

SOCIAL + EMAIL

FACEBOOK



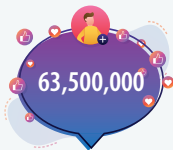
113K

FACEBOOK FANS
(+41.3% YoY)



2.8M

TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS
(-5.8% YoY)



63.5M

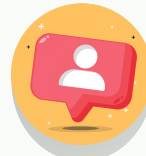
TOTAL IMPRESSIONS
(+11.5% YoY)



774K

TOTAL POST LINK CLICKS
(+52.2% YoY)

INSTAGRAM



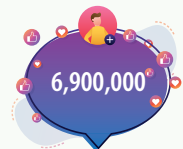
33K

INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS
(+24.4% YoY)



107K

TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS
(+85.6% YoY)



6.9M

TOTAL IMPRESSIONS
(+60.7% YoY)



528K

VIDEO VIEWS
(+122% YoY)



341.7K

WEB CONVERSIONS
(+143.7% YoY)

EMAIL



2.6M

EMAILS DELIVERED TO
LEISURE CONSUMERS
Average Open Rate **44.4%**
2.25% Click-through rate
(+87% YoY)

120.2K

EMAIL NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS
(+21% YoY)

257K

EMAILS DELIVERED TO
MEETING PLANNERS
Average Open Rate **32.3%**
1.95% Click-through rate

15.5K

EMAILS DELIVERED TO
TOURISM INDUSTRY
PARTNERS

Source: Mailchimp CY2023

PUBLIC RELATIONS

3.6 Billion
Overall Impressions

2,596,690 Views

266,337 Engagements



457
Media mentions in
print, online and
social media outlets

- Hosted 35 media visits from key markets, national, lifestyle and travel publications.
- Hosted one media FAM for a destination-wide, springtime media familiarization to promote sustainability.
- Secured coverage with *USA Today*, *10 Best USA Today*, *FOX News*, *Southern Living*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Conde' Nast Traveler*, *National Geographic*, *AFAR*, *Lonely Planet*, *The Points Guy*, *Reader's Digest*, *ELLE Décor*, *HGTV*, *PureWow*, *TheTravel*, *InsideHook*, *Fodor's Travel*, *AAA Living*, *Garden & Gun*, *MediaNews Group* in *Philadelphia*, *Atlanta Magazine*, *Fox 5 Atlanta*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Flamingo Magazine*, *Orlando Sentinel*, *WFLA* and *WTSP* in *Tampa*, *Tampa Bay Times*, *South Florida Sun Sentinel*, *Jacksonville Business Journal* and more!
- Distributed 28 press releases to key media in target markets.
- Executed consumer promotions with Florida Gators Sweepstakes and Toyota, Harris Teeter Supermarkets, *The Bob & Sheri Show* (Charlotte, NC), and *Folio Weekly* (NE FL).
- Sponsored and executed Atlanta Sustainable Fashion Week (ATLSFW).
- Executed influencer media mailer campaigns for National Dog Day and Dickens on Centre.
- Attended VISIT FLORIDA Media Mission in California.



UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS

LOCAL EVENTS



Welcomed players and fans during the annual TaxSlayer Gator Bowl including hosting the Clemson Tigers at the Omni Amelia Island Resort.



Promoted all auto-related events for the 29th annual Amelia Island Concours Week, generating \$40.2M in economic impact from off-island visitors.



Hosted the annual Amelia Island Restaurant Week's Sweet 16 with 27 participating restaurants and dining events around the island.

Collaborated with 35+ third-party event producers on cross-promotional marketing efforts and sponsorships including the Chamber Music Festival, Book Festival, Shrimp Festival, ZOOMA Amelia Island race series, Petanque Amelia Island Open, Light Up Amelia, Shrimp Drop, and Right Whale Festival.



Executed the 9th annual Dickens on Centre Christmas Market and Festival featuring:

- \$5.9M in economic impact from off-island visitors.*
- Local business reported an increase in sales compared to 2021 and 2022.
- 446 bookings in 8 snow globes at the Enchanted Village.
- Sold out Dickens After Dark event.
- 204 registered runners at Run Like the Dickens.
- 700+ St. Nick letters and 581 families captured in St. Nick photos.
- Dickens Dining & Drinks mobile trail increased participation with over 2,000 check-in's throughout the month of December.
- Dickens on Centre Festival recognized as Signature Event of the Southeast by Southeast Tourism Society.

*Dickens
On Centre*

TRADE & INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Focusing on B2B, the destination was represented at trade shows targeting travel trade, meeting planners and media, both domestically and internationally.

International

- Trade shows attended: IPW, World Travel Market, Florida Huddle, Holiday World, UNITE, IMM UK, Meet the Media, Visit USA (UK & Ireland), and more.
- Hosted UK & Ireland Press Trip in destination that included articles in *The Scottish Sun*, *The Irish Sun*, *The Best Magazine*, and YouTube channel *Life of Reilly*.

Meeting Planners

- Trade shows attended: Visit Florida's Encounter and Connect Las Vegas.
- Launched quarterly email communications to meeting planner database.



PARTNER & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

PARTNER RELATIONS

AMELIA ISLAND

COME MAKE MEMORIES

Amelia Island tourism industry partners are at the core of the visitor experience and the reason our visitors **Come Make Memories™**. Through destination marketing, we strive to tell the story of each partner to visitors looking to stay, dine, shop, explore, host meetings, or get married. The AICVB also serves as a resource providing industry knowledge and business opportunities to local tourism businesses.

455

FREE BUSINESS LISTINGS ON
AMELIAISLAND.COM

11

NEW TOURISM BUSINESSES
OPENED IN 2023

30

TRAVEL WRITERS AND INFLUENCERS
HOSTED BY PARTNERS

27

PARTNER NEWSLETTERS DEPLOYED

15,417

SUCCESSFUL DELIVERIES

8,070

OPENS

52.34%

OPEN RATE

(27% in 2022, 35% in 2021)

Source: MailChimp



*The Ritz-Carlton,
Amelia Island*

INSPIRATION GUIDES

30,617K

DISTRIBUTED IN CY2023

4,917

MAILED TO CONSUMERS

25,700

DISTRIBUTED TO
PARTNER BUSINESSES

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The impact of tourism goes beyond the successful metrics of the visitor experience and into the community we serve. By educating stakeholders, partners, and residents on the community-shared value of tourism and the commitment to quality of place, we build allies to support and advocate on its behalf.

- Conducted 17 tourism presentations to community groups.
- Finalized **Amelia Island Ambassador Program** for early 2024 launch.
- Participated in **Fernandina 200 Bicentennial Program**. Continued working on efforts to approve and fund a countywide bicentennial mural project.
- Participated in **Nassau Prosperity Alliance, Nassau County Chamber of Commerce Leadership Nassau, and Nassau County Economic Development Board Business Retention and Expansion Program**.
- Celebrated **National Travel and Tourism Week** by sharing the message that Tourism Works for Nassau County through City and County Proclamations, local ads, and the Shrimp Festival Parade.
- Co-hosted 2nd annual **Downtown to Dunes Cleanup** in partnership with **Keep Nassau Beautiful** and announced 5 lodging partners receiving their Green Lodging Certification through Audubon International.
- Began working with the City and County on a new education effort surrounding wildlife-friendly lighting on the beach and additional efforts to ensure guests and residents know about sustainability efforts.
- Led group of volunteers for **Barnabas Empty Bowls Fundraiser**.
- Leveraged partnership with the **TaxSlayer Gator Bowl** so 100 backpacks packed by Clemson University Football Team for the **First Coast Blessings in a Backpack** program benefited local students at Hilliard Elementary School in Nassau County.
- Presented Nassau County as a viable location for the **Florida Museum of Black History** to the Florida Black History Task Force as appointed by Governor DeSantis.





Amelia Island, Florida



#AmeliaIsland #LoveAmelia

AMELIA ISLAND

COME MAKE MEMORIES

AmeliaIsland.com • AmeliaIslandTDC.com • AmeliaIslandCVB.com

The Amelia Island Tourist Development Council is a program of the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners.